The Blood We Owe

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/27940544.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	Graphic Depictions Of Violence
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationships:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham & Hannibal Lecter, Alana Bloom & Will Graham, Beverly Katz & Jimmy Price & Brian Zeller
Characters:	Will Graham, Will Graham's Dogs, Hannibal Lecter, Jack Crawford, Alana Bloom
Additional Tags:	Season/Series 02, Vampires, Abigail Hobbs Lives, POV Will Graham, Caring Hannibal Lecter, Character Turned Into Vampire, Alternate Universe - Vampire, FBI Agent Will Graham, Jack Crawford Being Jack Crawford, Serial Killers, Takes place after Will is released, Season/Series 02 Spoilers, Season/Series 01 Spoilers, Will Graham is a Mess, Moral Ambiguity, Vampire Hannibal Lecter, Vampire Will Graham, Gay Male Character, Blood Kink, maybe smut, probably non-graphic smut
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2020-12-07 Updated: 2020-12-10 Words: 1,953 Chapters: 2/?

The Blood We Owe

by lesbiankarlmarx

Summary

“Tell me, Will, are you lustful at the sight of blood?”
My heartbeat picks up speed as I think back to Hannibal in the ambulance, his hands bloody from performing surgery, a streak of red along his cheek. It was all I could do to resist the urge to approach him savagely, to soak up the blood with my lips on his skin.
I hesitate. Was that lust? Or was it something darker?

Notes

There is going to be a fair amount of blood in this, so if you don't want to read about that, this story is not for you. Otherwise I don't anticipate any more content warnings, but if anything comes up, I'll put it in the notes.

Sângerete

He isn't armed, so neither am I. I have a tranquilizer gun in my back pocket, but I'm only partially aware of it as I advance into the house. There is blood painted like some kind of modern interior design on the doorframe and walls. I can hear Jack's voice behind me, giving instructions to the SWAT team parked in the driveway. He knows I want to go in alone. This is an amateur killer, driven to violence likely by mental illness and desperation. He won't need much force to surrender, and as regretful as it is, his victim is most likely already dead.

There is broken glass on the floor in a trail leading beyond the dining room -- my hand finds the gun in my pocket as I brace myself for a gory scene. I approach the hallway and there is a woman on the floor. Her face is grimaced in pain, and her arms have fallen limp around the bloody gash on the side of her neck. Price will say she died eighteen minutes ago. I see her twenty minutes ago, clutching her neck as the gash fills up again and again with blood. She can't contain it all and the pain that drives her to her knees. She hears footsteps, but cannot focus. She dies on the floor, broken glass from the pitcher she wielded surrounding her on the linoleum floor like a collage.

This is no design. There is desperation and hunger in the finger imprints and bite marks on her neck. This was not premeditated. My thoughts turn to the number: eighteen minutes, give or take a few. Had Jack picked up the phone on its first ring and traced it back to Catherwood Road in less time, perhaps she could have been saved. Of course, that would mean someone would have to pull the trigger on the killer.

I follow his path through the hallway and up a staircase on the left. Another car parks in the driveway, audible through a cracked window -- Price, Zeller, and Katz are here, ready to collect evidence once the threat has passed. They are counting on me to tranquilize him, and if that fails, to get out in time for the FBI to shoot him down. I do not expect to see a face so young when I enter the master bedroom, but I do expect the blood. His face and hands are coated in it, and there are droplets all over the carpet and bedspread. He looks about twenty-three, as young as my students at the FBI Academy in Quantico. Fear and frustration are evident in his face as well as the ransacked bed. Fortunately, the woman in the hallway was home alone, and the killer has not found another victim here. Breathing heavily, he turns to me, and I point my weapon toward the floor.

"What's your name?" I ask him.

“Lawrence Adams.”

“Lawrence, I need you to put your hands where I can see them and surrender yourself.”

“I don’t have a gun,” he says, and his hands twitch from their position under him.

“I know. Put your hands in the air.”

He does so, and as I take a step toward him, his body animates, as if suddenly awakened. His next movement is so fast I barely perceive it, but I find myself pinned to the wall with the tranquilizer gun slipping out of my hand. I make an effort to hold onto it, but as I do, I feel his teeth pierce my neck. My hand reaches out to push him away, but his grip on me is strong. I kick him in the thigh, and he falls backward, giving me the time to retrieve the tranquilizer gun. His mouth drips fresh blood to match my wound, and it dots the carpet in slow motion as the dart hits him in the shoulder. He falls, and I barely register the pain in my neck as I shout to Jack. We don’t know the drug’s effects on him, and it could be mere minutes before he rises again. Jack emerges at the top of the staircase trailed by at least six SWAT agents. I shoot Jack a look, and he orders them to stay there. Jack notices my bleeding neck before he sees the unconscious boy.

“Get in the ambulance, Will. Now.” He watches me descend the staircase as he deals with the killer’s limp body. I grimace at the growing pain in my neck and let a special agent medic guide me to the ambulance. They apply pressure, and as the pain subsides, I fall unconscious.

I wake with stitches and a bandage protecting them. Inevitably, my thoughts turn to Abigail, who found herself in the hospital with a similar wound a short time before. Again, Alana sits in a chair in the corner of the room, reading.

“Was I in surgery?” I say, surprised at the breathiness of my voice.

Looking up, she says my name, and I watch as pity and then anger floods her face.

“I don’t know what Jack thought he was doing, letting you go in there unarmed.”

I sigh. The longer she’s worked with Jack, the more Alana finds to criticize.“ It was my choice. I was just stupid to hesitate to shoot him.”

“I’m glad you didn’t kill him, Will. He’s doing better in the hospital.”

I think back to my time at the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane, and I can’t see how that would be the case.

Alana looks at me with pity a moment more and rises from the chair. “Someone’s here to see you.”

Someone. I can already guess who it is. Sure enough, as soon as Alana closes the door behind her, I hear a familiar voice.

“Hello, Will.”

Cháo huyết

Chapter Summary

Hannibal drives Will home from the hospital.

The hunger sinks in as soon as I see his polished Italian shoes in the doorway. My eyes rake up his body, migrating from bare hands to pressed shirt to exposed neck, a pale and uncertain color. I settle into the unfamiliarity of the sensation as Hannibal approaches the hospital bed with his hands clasped and hanging in front of him. Something dark and hot in my stomach leaps out at him, viciously attaching to his neck, drawing blood. I discard the image and cast my eyes straight at Hannibal's face.

"Hello, Dr. Lecter."

"How do you feel?" He perches elegantly on the edge of the bed.

"Like someone bit me." His mouth quirks up at one side, but he waits for more. "I can barely feel it."

Hannibal is satisfied with this answer, and as he nods his eyes stray to the bandage on my neck. To the stitches underneath, obscured but present.

"They found a kind of venom in the wound."

Hearing the word, I can feel the venom in the pit of my stomach, twisting around in nausea, planting foreign impulses in my nervous system. Again I see myself rising from the bed and dragging my teeth along the warm skin on Hannibal's neck, tearing it open like wax paper. This time I let the vision linger, reveling in the savory, perfume-like taste of his blood. I let myself dangle between the two realities a moment more, watching as Hannibal's face shifts from calm to horror and back again, before I refocus. I shoot Hannibal a questioning look.

“The scientists back at the lab couldn’t identify it. Perhaps something Adams injected prior…” To my surprise, as I begin to tune out his words, my attention is drawn to his face. I imagine caressing it like a mother doting on a fevered child; how shocking would my piercing canines be after I meet his face with a light touch, perhaps trace the lines on his face with my fingertips -- or lips? I am amused. As much as he proselytizes about my covert impulse for violence, Hannibal would not guess what accompanies it. I’ve dwelt on the gentler impulse as often as the violent one. I’ve had dreams of skin-to-skin contact and imagined my hands in his hair so often I know its softness as if from memory.

“I feel polluted,” I say, knowing my face mirrors the disgust I feign in my voice.

“Not powerful?” Hannibal contradicts, ever perceptive. “The killer has passed his strength on to you.”

“He left me vulnerable.” This much I do believe. He didn’t attack me with the same thirst as he did the woman he left to bleed out in the hallway. By the time his thirst was satiated, his attack would have been self defense, if not an attempt at corruption. Which, if my unsaid suspicions were correct, as improbable as they were, would be successful. Despite the force with which he attached his teeth to my neck, such a shallow wound would not leave me dead, not when I had options other than bleeding out on the floor.

Hannibal contemplates this, but before he can voice his thoughts, a tall, angular nurse enters the room.

“As long as you feel alright, and the forensics team doesn’t want any more blood samples, you’re free to go.”

I tell her I will be in touch with them, which I will, assuming Jack permits me to return to the FBI on Monday. I’ve returned to the field in worse condition.

Hannibal walks with me to retrieve my clothes; he waits outside the bathroom while I change. It is his Bentley, waiting outside the Hospital, that drives me the hour back to Wolf Trap, Virginia. It is only then, looking out the window at the passing city, that I realize it is night, most likely 10 or 11pm. My thoughts inevitably turn to my dogs, who manage fine in

my absence but have been left for a longer stretch than anticipated. I briefly wonder if Alana has visited them.

Hannibal answers my unspoken question. “I stopped by to feed your dogs.”

“Thank you.” I mean it. Whatever he’s feeding them. “How are they?”

“Winston greeted me like an old friend.” Traitor. “Your paternal instincts are evident in your strays as well as Abigail.”

I smile shallowly with my head still turned toward the window. “I can provide for them better than I could for her.”

I regret saying it almost as soon as I do because I don’t want to discuss this with Hannibal. It makes me ill to think of the lies he will tell in an effort to delude me further.

“Have you heard of love languages, Will?”

My head snaps back to look at him, but he is staring ahead, a red glint reflected from the traffic light in his eye.

“Yes.”

“You loved Abigail the way she knew how to be loved. Your ability to do so is admirable, Will, and you shouldn’t deny it.”

It hurts to think of my inadequacy in protecting Abigail, and it hurts more for Hannibal to insist the opposite, removing himself from the narrative.

We pull into my driveway to the sound of snow crunching under Hannibal's tires. The window is too narrow to see any of the other four, but the sight of Winston and Buster's barking faces and wagging tails brings a smile to my face. Hannibal steps out of the car and waits a foot or two in front of it while I greet the dogs. I usher them inside and hold the door open to say goodbye.

"Goodnight, Will. I trust I will see you at your appointment on Sunday."

"Goodnight, Hannibal."

Watching him stand there, hands in the pockets of his olive green overcoat, warmth spreading from one corner of his mouth to the other, I feel a rare tenderness for him.

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